



Help High School Students Succeed

"I want all our kids to have an equal shot at a better life, and I know their parents do, too. I'm not willing to give up on one high school student.

I want each and every one to graduate and move on to a happy, productive life."

Governor Chris Gregoire
December 14, 2005

Governor Gregoire's Plan Will Help Students Master the Skills Needed to Graduate by:

- ✓ Providing focused tools and assistance to students struggling to pass the WASL
- ✓ Developing coursework to help students meet mathematics standards

As the mother of two daughters, Gov. Chris Gregoire knows there are critical milestones in the lives of young people, and that none is more crucial than a high school diploma that reflects mastery of the skills and knowledge needed to succeed – be it in college or the workforce.

Governor stands by the WASL

Washington State has set quality graduation standards for its high school students and the Governor stands by the requirement, starting with the Class of 2008, that they pass the 10th grade WASL (Washington Assessment of Student Learning) tests before they can receive a diploma.

Schools strong on the basics are key

Governor Gregoire recognizes that public schools strong on the basics are key in preparing students to meet the new graduations requirements. That's why she provided in the current, two-year state budget adopted by the Legislature earlier this year an additional \$450 million to strengthen the K-12 education system, including restoration of two voter-approved initiatives that reduce class sizes in the lower grades and provide pay raises to teachers.

More tools to help struggling students

Still, too many high school students are not passing WASL tests in reading, writing and especially mathematics.

And now, her 2006 supplemental budget proposal focuses on students struggling to pass the WASL tests. The Governor believes that with the right assistance and learning tools, students who failed the test at first can meet the state's standards for academic achievement and earn a high school diploma that really means something. At the same time, she is proposing new programs that will help high school graduates move into promising careers.

\$38.5 million to help high school kids struggling to pass the WASL

The Governor proposes that beginning in July, \$38.5 million from the state General Fund be provided to help students who have been unsuccessful in one or more 10th grade WASL tests in reading, writing and mathematics. School districts may use the new funding to offer intensive instruction in ways that best fit the needs of the districts' students. This could include: summer school; additional classes before or after school, or on Saturdays; skill seminars; test preparation; and in-school or out-of-school tutoring. These activities may occur on a school campus, via the Internet, and at other locations and times that meet student needs. Her plan also:

- **Requires school district accountability**, including full reporting on how their shares of new WASL-assistance funds are used. Districts are required to report the types of assistance students selected to help them pass the WASL, the number of students who took part in each option and, most importantly, the results students achieved. Additionally, funds will be set aside to reward districts that develop unique programs that are shown to help struggling students succeed.
- **Helps students for whom English is a second language**, providing \$100,000 to finance work by the state Superintendent of Public Instruction office to investigate how best to make sure language is not an obstacle to meeting standards in math.

Meeting the mathematics challenge

Let's face it. Many students dislike and fear math. In fact, the word "mathematics" scares a lot of adults. It's no surprise that so many high school students are struggling with math and failing to demonstrate skills that meet state standards. Washington educators have been working to find better ways to help students. The Governor's supplemental budget proposal provides \$3.4 million to:

- **Helps students farthest behind in math.** New mathematics materials are incorporated in a course presented as a series of learning experiences. Students focus on attaining math knowledge and skill one "bite" at a time. Students have the opportunity to see their learning progress by periodic submission of math work samples or mini-WASL assessments. Success on these work samples or mini-WASLs collectively lead to a determination that the student has met the state mathematics standard for high school graduation.
- **Helps students at home.** New math tutorial materials are developed and made available via the Internet for students and their parents or tutors, so math skills can be practiced and reinforced.

Contact: Judy Hartmann, Executive Policy Advisor, (360) 902-0638, or judy.hartmann@gov.wa.gov.

